(1) enter into a lease with the State of New York, for a term of 99 years, for State-owned land within the boundaries of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River located at an area known as Mongaup near the confluence of the Mongaup and Upper Delaware Rivers in the State of New York; and

(2) construct and operate such a visitor center on land leased under paragraph (2).

H.R. 54

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR UPPER DELAWARE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The last sentence of paragraph (1) of section 704(f) of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1274 note) is amended by striking ''20'' and inserting ''30''.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL PRAYER

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a constitutional amendment to ensure that students can choose to pray in school. Regrettably, the notion of the separation of church and state has been widely misrepresented in recent years, and the government has strayed far from the vision of America as established by the Founding Fathers.

Our Founding Fathers had the foresight and wisdom to understand that a government cannot secure the freedom of religion if at the same time it favors one religion over another through official actions. Their philosophy was one of even-handed treatment of the different faiths practiced in America, a philosophy that was at the very core of what their new nation was to be about. Somehow, this philosophy is often interpreted today to mean that religion has no place at all in public life, no matter what its form. President Reagan summarized the situation well when he remarked, ''The First Amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people of this country from religious values; it was written to protect religious values from government tyranny.'' And this is what voluntary school prayer is about, making sure that prayer, regardless of its denomination, is protected.

There can be little doubt that no student should be forced to pray in a certain fashion or be forced to pray at all. At the same time, a student should not be prohibited from praying, just because he/she is attending a public school. This straightforward principle is lost on the liberal courts and high-minded bureaucrats who have systematically eroded the right to voluntary school prayer, and it is now necessary to correct the situation through a constitutional amendment. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and make a strong statement in support of the freedom of religion.

CRUISES TO NOWHERE ACT 1999

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation regarding so-called ''cruises to nowhere.'' ''Cruises to nowhere'' are gambling cruises, ships where a destination, created for the sole purpose of allowing passengers to gamble on the high seas on board a floating casino. The cruises depart from a certain state, sail three miles into international waters for gambling, and then return to the same state. States receive no revenue from the cruises, but must absorb the social costs associated with the gambling traffic through their state.

Mr. Speaker, my legislation is about the fundamental principle that states should be able to determine on their own if they want gambling cruises in their state. My colleagues should be aware that on October 16, 1998, a federal district court ruled in the state of South Carolina that federal law preempts certain state laws prohibiting ''cruises to nowhere,'' and are therefore unenforceable. (Casino Ventures v. Robert M. Stewart, et al. C/A No. 2:98–1923–18, October 1998) The federal law cited by the court is a poorly worded 1992 amendment to the Johnson Act buried a bill designating the ''Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary'' (P.L. 102–251). Congress did not intend for the 1992 amendment to supercede states' rights, and we should act to restore state sovereignty with regard highstates, unpoliced and unregulated casino gambling around the country.

Almost every state has a law making it illegal to possess gambling equipment (e.g., slot machines). Thus it should be patently illegal for a day-trip gambling boat to dock in a state with statues that clearly prohibit such operations, and it was illegal prior to enactment of the 1992 Johnson Act amendment.

In the meantime, casino ''cruises to nowhere'' have started operating out of Florida, Georgia, New York, Massachusetts, and South Carolina. Most recently, ''cruises to nowhere'' are planning to dock in Virginia and begin operations out of Virginia Beach. Unless Congress acts soon, almost all other states bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, or Gulf of Mexico could expect gambling ships to be docking very soon.

The legislation I am introducing today would make it clear that no preexisting state gambling law is weakened, preempted, or superseded by the 1992 Johnson Act amendment. My legislation will restore state sovereignty with regard to ''cruises to nowhere.'' (It will give states the right to debate, vote and ultimately decide for themselves if they want this type of gambling). If states do choose to permit ''cruises to nowhere,'' they can enact appropriate legislation, but will not be forced to by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in this fundamental issue of restoring states' rights. In particular, I urge members from coastal states to take a look at this issue and join me as a cosponsor.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Cruises-to-Nowhere Act of 1999''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) Gambling cruises-to-nowhere are voyages in which a vessel departs a State, sails 3 miles into international waters for the primary purpose of offering gambling beyond the jurisdication of Federal and State laws prohibiting that activity, and returns to the same State.

(2) Legal authorities have ruled that existing State laws cannot stop the operation of gambling cruises-to-nowhere, on the basis that the Congress preempted such State laws by the enactment of an obscure amendment buried in a 1992 law entitled ''An Act to provide for the designation of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary'' (Public Law 102–251).

(3) Gambling cruises-to-nowhere offer high-stakes, untaxed, unpoliced, and unregulated casino gambling.

(4) Accordingly, it is necessary to make absolutely clear that gambling cruises-to-nowhere enjoy no special exception from the operation of existing or future State laws and that relevant Federal law is not intended to preempt, supersede, or weaken the authority of States to apply their own laws to gambling cruises-to-nowhere.

SEC. 3. STATE AUTHORITY OVER CRUISES-TO-NOWHERE.

Section 5 of the Act of January 2, 1951, entitled ''An Act to prohibit transportation of gambling devices in interstate and foreign commerce'' (15 U.S.C. 1175; popularly known as the Johnson Act), is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by striking ''enacted''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) NO PREEMPTION OF STATE LAWS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt the law of any State or possession of the United States.''.

THE STAND-BY-YOUR-AD ACT

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the 1998 campaign season marked a new low in political advertising or not. it is difficult to measure degrees of the bottom of the barrel or the volume of mud spread across the air. I know for a fact that the 1998 campaign season was more of the mess that results when intelligent discourse gives way to attack and counterattack.

Last year, the House of Representatives took an arduous and promising step toward cleaning up our Nation's political campaigns. We passed the Shays-Meehan campaign reform bill, which had been amended to include a version of the Stand-by-Your-Ad proposal that Representative STEPHEN HORN and I introduced in 1997. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Senate lacked the political will to see campaign reform through to a conclusion. I hope that 1999 will prove a more fruitful year for campaign reform.

In that light, Representative HORN and I are once again introducing the Stand-by-Your-Ad proposal. Our legislation would require candidates to appear full-screen in television ads and thus take responsibility for them. Candidates would be required to provide comparable disclosure, boldly and clearly, in both radio and print ads. These enhanced disclosure requirements would also apply to party and independent committees.

It is too easy for candidates to attack one another on television without the voter knowing who is behind the dirt. Candidates can obscure their identities with postage stamp size disclaimers. We need to make effective the requirement that candidates say who they are and take responsibility for their ads' content. This is an important step toward strengthening the accountability of candidates and campaigns. Campaign reform is not just about money; it is also about improving the quality and responsibility of debate. The bipartisan bill Mr. HORN and I recommend to the House would start us down that path, not by regulating the content of ads but by requiring candidates to assume responsibility for them.

Our Stand-by-Your-Ad legislation has its origins in the North Carolina General Assembly where it has been championed by Lt. Governor Dennis Wicker and was approved last session by the Senate but not the House.

Stand by Your Ad is compatible with and complementary to the full range of campaign reform proposals that will be considered by the 106th Congress, from Shays-Meehan to the disclosure-only bills. By approving this proposal, the Congress can strengthen disclosure so as to make sponsorship more clear and to require an assumption of personal responsibility in a way likely to discourage the most irresponsible and distorted attacks. We invite our colleagues to join us as cosponsors of this legislation.

PREVENTING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Government Shutdown Prevention Act, legislation designed to maintain government operations that would otherwise be halted due to an impasse in budget negotiations between Congress and the President. I first introduced this legislation in 1989, and since then the need for it has become even more apparent. Joining me as original cosponsors are Representatives ROHRABACHER, WYNN, COX, ISTOOK, PITTS, EHLERS, DAVIS (VA), and HAYWORTH.

Since I entered Congress, there have been 8 government shutdowns, costing American taxpayer millions of dollars and diminishing his confidence in elected officials. The estimated cost of the 21-day shutdown of the 104th Congress was $44 million per day! During the first shutdown in the 104th Congress, 800,000 federal employees were ''furloughed''. Budget negotiations between Congress and the President should be about the American people, not a battleground for public relations.

This bill accomplishes a very simple function: to keep funding at levels allowing appropriators to complete their work while keeping the government operating. This bill essentially works as an automatic continuing resolution, providing for funding at the previous year's levels so the government can continue to operate, even through an impasse in budget negotiations. The legislation protects Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security by guaranteeing that they remain at their current funding levels.

As Members of Congress, we are duty-bound by the Constitution to forge a budget for the American people. At times our ideological disagreements have led to heartaches for our constituents. I propose, through this legislation, that we provide an environment whereupon we can work together and negotiate in good faith, and strive to reach a compromise that will be good for the people we serve.

We need to restore the public's faith in its leaders by showing that we have learned from our mistakes. Enactment of this legislation will send a clear message to the American people that we will no longer allow them to be pawns in budget disputes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1999

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to increase the cap on state authority to allocate Low Income Housing Tax Credits to $1.75 per capita and index the cap to inflation. The current cap of $1.25 per capita has not been adjusted since the program was created in 1986. Since that time, population growth has totaled about 5 percent.

Although building costs rise each year, as does the affordable housing needs of the nation, the federal government's most important and successful housing program is in effect being cut annually as a result of inflation. Since 1986, inflation has eroded the Housing Credit's purchasing power by nearly 50 percent, as measured by the Consumer Price Index. This cap is strangling state capacity to meet pressing low income housing needs.

Last year, I sponsored legislation with Representative LEWIS (D–GA) proposing this same increase in the Housing Credit cap and indexing it for inflation. Representatives ENSIGN (R–NV) and RANGEL (D–NY) also sponsored legislation to accomplish the same increase. Nearly 70 percent of the Ways and Means Committee and a total of 299 of our fellow House Members cosponsored one or both of these bills last year. Unfortunately, the Congress did not pass a Housing Credit increase because the Omnibus Appropriation bill eventually enacted was not large enough to accommodate it.

The Housing Credit is the primary federal-state tool for producing affordable rental housing all across the country. Since it was established, state agencies have allocated over $3 billion in Housing Credits to help finance nearly one million homes for low income families, including 70,000 apartments in 1997. In my own state of Connecticut, the Credit is responsible for helping finance over 7,000 apartments for low income families, including 650 apartments in 1997.

Despite the success of the Housing Credit in meeting affordable rental housing needs, the apartments it helps finance can barely keep pace with the nearly 100,000 low cost apartments which were demolished, abandoned, or converted to market rate use each year. Demand for Housing Credits currently outstrips supply by more than three to one nationwide. Increasing the cap as I propose would allow states to finance approximately 27,000 more critically-needed low income apartments each year using the Housing Credit, helping to meet this growing need.

A broad, bipartisan consensus exists for raising the Housing Credit cap, just as in 1993, when Congress made the Credit permanent. The Administration, the nation's governors and mayors, and virtually all major housing groups also support this increase.

I urge my colleagues to join me in a bipartisan effort to provide this long overdue increase in the Housing Credit cap.

REGARDING HOUSE RESOLUTION 612

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the 24,000 men and women of the United States Armed Forces who are currently involved in operations in the Persian Gulf Region.

It is important that we protect the interests of the United States. It is important that we have peace in the Middle East. It is important that we do what we can to prevent the development of weapons of mass destruction.

However, Mr. Speaker, we must pursue these goals with great caution. We must exercise restraint in our use of force. We must use great care when putting our young men and women in harms way. We must be circumspect before putting the lives of other citizens at risk. We must be prudent in our decisions to intervene in the internal affairs of foreign nations. We may not like Saddam Hussein, but that does not give us the right to declare his death.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the advisors to the President were very deliberate and judicious before arriving at the recommendation to undertake military action against Iraq. However, I am not certain that the assumptions upon which they relied are correct. I am not certain that Saddam Hussein poses the threat to our national security interests that many believe he does. I am not certain that Iraq has the capacity to deliver the kind of mass destruction that should cause us the kind of concern that has triggered this reaction. I am not certain that peace is best achieved through war.

Nonetheless, I stand behind our men and women whose courage and patriotism cannot